

Student Handbook

2024-2025



NONDISCRIMINATION
[JAA]

Newton County School District does not discriminate based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, religion or age in the admission to and provision of educational programs, activities and services or employment opportunities and benefits. The Title IX Coordinator handles all inquiries or complaints regarding the Newton County School District.

The Newton County School District Board Policies are online www.newton.k12.ms.us

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Newton County School District is to develop accountable, productive citizens, equipped for college, career, and beyond.

This handbook is prepared for students and parents/legal guardians in the Newton County School District. Its purpose is to provide both the guidelines and policies that govern the way we operate our schools. No one document can answer every question or address every concern that arises throughout the school year; however, every attempt has been made to address the issues that affect the daily lives of students in our district.

BOARD OF EDUCATION

Thomas “Camp” Keith.....	District A
Kenneth Thompson.....	District B
Marty McKee	District C
Joshua Sanders	District D
Jason Cain	District E

CENTRAL OFFICE ADMINISTRATION

15935 Highway 15
Decatur, MS 39327
Telephone (769) 757-0060
Office Hours: 8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. Monday – Friday

Superintendent of Education.....Brooke Sibley
Athletic
Coordinator.....
.....Bobby Bass
Athletic
Eligibility.....
.....Matt Walker
Director of Career and Technical Education.....Aaron Cooley
Director of Child Nutrition.....Tonette Cochran
Director of Federal Programs, Testing, Curriculum, & Accountability.....Jessica
Thomas
Director of Finance.....Cay Clark
Director of Maintenance.....Jonathan White
Director of Special Education, MTSS, & Student Services.....John May
Director of Technology.....Justin Mills
Director of TransportationJustin
Chaney
District Support Specialist for Alternative & Innovative Programs, Early, Childhood Education &
Operations.....
.....Jason Roberson
Human Resources/Payroll.....Tammy Jones

DISCIPLINE

[GAH, JBAC, JCAA, JCB, JCBB, JCBD, JDA, JDB, JDC, JDD, JDE, EBCA, JCDAC]

DISCIPLINE PLAN/CODE OF CONDUCT

Goal

The goal is to implement a consistent discipline plan that will foster maximum learning and the acquisition of social skills necessary for a productive life in a democratic society.

The district adopts a positive approach to discipline. The focus is on the prevention of unacceptable behavior. The premise is that each student is a unique and worthwhile individual whose rights are respected. Further, we respect and uphold our cultural, racial and societal differences. The district will not tolerate or condone any negative references or slurs made toward any person. The success of this discipline plan involves the cooperative effort of students, parents, teachers and administrators.

The philosophy concerning discipline in the district is based on the theory that our students are young ladies and gentlemen and as such should be capable of conducting themselves in accordance with all the standards of conduct in the best schools in America.

Every student should bear in mind that a complete and accurate record of student conduct is being kept by the school. A good record is an asset. A bad record is a liability. Special awards and/or recognition for good citizenship are given by each school to encourage appropriate behavior.

Due process will be afforded to all students as prescribed in the school board policy. The district prohibits the use or possession of weapons, illegal drugs and alcohol and will cooperate with allowing enforcement officers to control possession or use on school property. The possession or use of weapons, illegal drugs and alcohol on school property, or being under the influence of alcohol or drugs is prohibited. Public school officials may conduct unannounced searches of school property, such as school lockers.

Expectation of Students

The student is expected to adhere to the rules and regulations of the district and the classroom. Each student should feel a personal responsibility in the learning process. Staying on task discourages misbehavior and encourages learning.

Role of Teachers

The teacher must be consistent in enforcing the rules of the school district. The classroom rules should be posted and clearly understood by the student. The teacher will not deviate from the stated procedure to be followed when infractions occur. Good classroom management requires constant vigilance and intelligent action on the part of the teachers.

The teacher should keep accurate records of disciplinary actions, such as why and when action was taken, etc. Documentation is required by law. The teacher must be sure that the student understands when and why the punishment will occur.

The teacher should be available for parent conferences. All conferences will be scheduled in advance through the school's office.

The teacher will complete a discipline referral for any incident that could have serious consequences for the child and/or community.

Role of the Parents

Communication between the parent and school personnel is vital to the child's success in school. A child needs to feel loved, wanted and respected. Fostering a child's positive self concept lays the foundation for appropriate behavior.

The school has the responsibility to ensure that no student's learning will be infringed upon by another student's constant misbehavior. An individual's chronic misbehavior is the responsibility of the parents.

Role of Administrators

The administration should implement a consistent discipline program. Principals who support their teachers and demonstrate a sincere concern for the welfare of the students create a positive learning environment. Implementing an effective discipline program is the responsibility of the principal.

Since no policy can be written that will cover every unique situation, the judgment of the seriousness of an offense and the disciplinary action to be taken will rest finally in the hands of the administration (in consultation with the faculty member(s) immediately involved or witness to the incident).

CORPORAL PUNISHMENT

- F. Loss of privileges means that during the time stated the student cannot participate in assemblies or any school function designated as an extra activity (e.g., athletic events, dances, plays, extra-curricular programs, field trips, school sponsored activities)

SEVERE CLAUSE

Any problem considered severe by the administration including, but not limited to, fighting, violations of drug, alcohol, tobacco regulations, possession of a weapon on campus, or gross disrespect for a staff member could warrant application of any of the steps 3 through 6 on the school-wide discipline plan and may result in the student being referred to law enforcement officials.

SUSPENSION

A student may be suspended, expelled or sent to the alternative education class for misconduct in the school or on school property (MS Code Section 37-11-29), on the way to and/or from school or at any school/district related event. This includes misconduct occurring on property other than school property or other than at a school/district related activity or event when the conduct by a student, in the determination of the principal or superintendent, renders that the student's presence in the classroom is a disruption to the educational environment of the school or is a detriment to the best interest and welfare of the students and teacher in a class as a whole.

In-School Suspension

When a student is placed in in-school suspension, the teacher and/or the in-school suspension officer will provide school work for the student. If a student refuses to do his/her work, the principal may add days to the suspension. The following rules apply:

- Lunch will be catered to the students
- Students will be placed in a small cubicle with a desk, if available
- Students may not participate in extracurricular activities during the suspension time
- Students will be denied break privileges

A student placed in in-school suspension for the third time will be considered for out-of-school suspension.

Out-of-School Suspension

Suspension is a forfeiture of participation in regularly scheduled school activities for not more than 10 school days, including all extra-curricular activities. In all cases, parent/legal guardians must come to the school for a personal conference with the designated school administrator before the student will be allowed to return to classes.

School principals will have the authority to suspend students from school attendance for misconduct in the school or on school property, on the way to and/or from school, on school buses and/or at any school/district related event. Regardless of the time or place, these are considered as extensions of the school day and will be governed by the same procedures. In order to establish effective school discipline, principals will have the authority to place a student in the care of their parents for the remainder of the school day. Such placement will not be construed as a suspension.

Any suspension must be preceded by appearance of the student before the principal or his/her designee, at which time the student will be informed of the violation and the basis of the accusation. The principal will investigate the situation causing the violation, to the extent possible and reasonable, including but not limited to, interviewing other students and faculty members who may have witnessed the infraction. **The student will be allowed to have other students or faculty called in who could support his/her side of the story and place such conduct in what he/she considers to be the proper context.**

In all instances of suspension, parents shall be notified by telephone if they can be reached with reasonable effort and by letter from the principal sent on the day of suspension. During any period of out-of-school suspension, the student will not be permitted to be on school grounds or attend or participate in any school/district related activity including band, athletics, chorus, strings, etc.

In the event the suspension occurs during the last 10 days of any term or semester, the student will be permitted to take final exams or submit required work as would be necessary to complete the course of instruction for that semester or term, provided that all work is completed after the regular school day.

After the first and second out-of-school suspensions, a parent/legal guardian must appear in person or contact the principal before the student returns to school.

After three out-of-school suspensions, the principal may recommend expulsion to the school board, but in certain cases expulsion may be recommended on the first offense.

Additionally, the student may be referred for placement in the Alternative School.

Parental Assistance Program

Parents of students who are having serious disciplinary problems may be asked to come to the school and attend classes with their child during an entire day in order to monitor conduct and establish new behavioral patterns.

EXPULSION

Expulsion is total exclusion of the student from participation in or attendance at any school/district related activity. Upon recommendation from the Superintendent of Education or his/her designee, the school board may expel or exempt students from attendance in accordance with the provisions of the Statutes of the State of Mississippi. The School Board will be the sole authority to expel a student from school.

Enrollment of students suspended or expelled from other school districts

Newton County School District will not enroll nonresident students from other school districts while said students are under suspension or after they have been expelled.

APPEAL OF DISCIPLINARY ACTION

Appeal of Suspension Decision/Due Process

If a student/parent/guardian is aggrieved by the suspension decision of the administrator, the student/parent/guardian may appeal the decision in accordance with the following guidelines approved by the Board of Education:

1. For appeal of suspensions lasting from 1-5 school days as invoked by principals/assistant principals, the student/parent/guardian may appeal to the principal. The decision of the principal shall be final.
2. For appeal of suspensions lasting from 6-10 days as invoked by a principal/assistant principal, approved by the principal and authorized by the District Office, the appeal may be made to the District Discipline Committee. The decision of the District Discipline Committee and the superintendent will be final.
3. For appeal of suspensions lasting more than 10 days, appeal may be made to the Board of Education.
4. All requests must be made in writing.
5. Failure to appear at the scheduled time without prior notification to the superintendent/assistant superintendent will represent a forfeiture of the review.
6. A student may be put in parent care or classroom until the issue is resolved.
7. If the decision of the committee is to uphold the principal's decision, then the student will be required to fulfill said disciplinary action.

Due Process: Appeals of Disciplinary Actions

In order to preserve a student's rights and the protection of due process of law, any student shall be given the opportunity for a hearing before appropriate school district officials should he/she or his parent/guardian desire to have a hearing. (Differences, disputes, and conflicts between students and staff are usually civil matters and not criminal ones.) When a student and/or his/her parent/guardian are dissatisfied with a disciplinary decision imposed by school staff, then the student and/or his/her parent/guardian may appeal. Appeals must be made prior to the end of the student's suspension. There is a defined method and protocol to the

appeals procedure. The following is the step-by-step procedure to be used for appealing decisions/actions of school district personnel:

1. If the appeal concerns an action by a teacher, the appeal is to first be made to the teacher's supervising principal.
2. If the appeal concerns an action by a principal, then the initial appeal should be made to that administrator.
3. If, after Step 2 no consensus is reached, the appeal may be made to the District Discipline Committee. The District Discipline Committee will render its decision in the matter and submit the same to the Superintendent. The Superintendent is authorized to accept, reject, and/or modify the decision of the Committee.
4. If, after Step 3 no consensus is reached, the student or his/her parent/guardian may make a written request for appeal to the Board of Education. This request must be made through the use of the proper request form, which is available in the Office of the Superintendent. The Board, in its sole and absolute discretion, will determine whether or not the appeal has merit to be heard by the Board. If so, it will be heard in the form of documents and testimony from the Discipline Hearing. If the Board determines that the Superintendent's decision and/or the decision of the Disciplinary Committee is final, then such an appeal request will be denied and the student and/or his/her parent/guardian shall be notified in writing by the District Office.

District Discipline Committee

The District Discipline Committee is directed by the Federal Programs Director, who shall organize, chair, and direct the procedural matters connected with the operation of the committee. This committee will be composed of individuals appointed by the Federal Programs Director. The committee will meet in the District Office on a regular basis to hear student matters as necessary under the guidelines of the district's discipline plan and appeals procedures. Upon completion of the committee's responsibilities, the Federal Programs shall notify the Superintendent of the committee's decision. The Superintendent shall have authority to accept, reject, and/or modify the decision of the committee based upon the report of the Federal Programs Director or a designee.

DRUG, ALCOHOL, TOBACCO, AND ELECTRONIC/VAPOR CIGARETTE USE

Newton County School District prohibits the possession or being under the influence of illegal drugs and alcohol, or the use of tobacco or electronic/vapor cigarettes; and will cooperate with all law enforcement officers to control possession or use on school property.